

The Argotist Online™

[Home](#) [Articles](#) [Interviews](#) [Features](#) [Ebooks](#) [Submissions](#) [Links](#)

Adam Fieled

(Editor, P.F.S. Post)

Adam Fieled is a poet, critic, and musician currently based in Philadelphia. He has released three print books: *Opera Bufo* (Otoliths, 2007), *When You Bit...* (Otoliths, 2008), and *Chimes* (Blazevox, 2009), as well as numerous e-books, chaps, and e-chaps. His work has appeared in journals like *Tears in the Fence*, *Great Works*, *Upstairs at Duroc*, *Cake Train*, and in the *&Now Anthology* from Lake Forest College Press. A magna cum laude graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, he also holds an MFA from New England College and an MA from Temple University, where he is finishing his PhD.

Q: How has publishing changed with the advent of short-run printing and print-on-demand possibilities? Does this negate any need to sell a specific number of a title? Is this a freedom from traditional print expectations/values?

A: I think that POD possibilities have forever altered the hegemonic dominance of print and print publishing. In an age rapidly being transformed by the Internet, POD offers the best of both worlds; print for those who want print (though this number seems to be steadily shrinking), free online availability for more casual readers or those who feel comfortable absorbing texts online. "Print values" are becoming outmoded as the vast rewards of Net publishing begin to become appreciated—instant international distribution, low costs, wide availability.

Q: Why does poetry continue to create schools and movements who feud?

A: One generally operative truth I've learned about human beings is that they hate differences. People are threatened by differences and will do anything they can to surround themselves with people and situations that reflect their own cultural, aesthetic, and intellectual values. Part of this process involves belittling those with different value systems. Ideally, art is utopian and egalitarian and should rise above this sort of thing, but practically, poets are people and not necessarily any purer or more spiritual than anyone else. As long as people are not willing to tolerate differences, in poetry as in all other endeavors, exclusivity and mistrust are bound to stay the rule rather than the exception.

Q: With POD possibilities, including various organisations that will take on anything without a set-up fee and simply send royalties to the author, do poetry publishers need arts council subsidies any more?

A: Publishers could always use money, to expand or even just to sharpen what they have. If I had enough money, I could transform P.F.S. Post from a simple site into a complex one, move it into a less modest space and generally renovate. Unfortunately, the Pennsylvania Arts Council is very stingy and gives grants to poets once every three or four years. Even with POD and other new-ish modes of production, a few extra dollars/pounds are always helpful. Arts councils are an opportunity for governments to demonstrate their belief in the value of the arts, but there seems to be little funding offered at the moment, at least in the U.S.

Q: If poetry presses are concerned with cultivating a wider readership, could this not be done more effectively via the Internet (where there are thousands of potential readers) rather than worrying about sales of printed poetry?

A: I do think that for a publisher to be worried about print sales is beside the point right now. Look at the music business—the Internet has all but destroyed it. The Internet has changed the face of our civilization and print poetry books have never been big sellers anyway, with a few notable exceptions. Any publisher who wants a wide audience will have to move to the Web. That doesn't mean the end of print, necessarily, but it does mean a sort of reckoning for print publishers and what is and isn't possible right now. The Zeitgeist is slanted much more towards the Net and what can be done with it. I think it might be better for a publisher to worry about setting up a good site rather than worrying that print books are purchased.

copyright © Adam Fieled